1940 - England Invaded

**A role-playing game created in 16 hours
By Simon Washbourne**

Introduction

I wrote this game in response to a challenge on The Forge forum to design a role-playing game within 24 hours, from start to finish.

I decided on a traditional style of role-playing game, where characters are created by assigning attributes and skills and do on because the old-fashioned feel of the game seemed to warrant it.

The game is inspired by current events in Iraq and an old West End Games rpg by Greg Costikyan called The Price of Freedom – although it is in no way supposed to be any form of political comment or statement by me. It is pure fantasy albeit with a historical base and should be read and is intended to be played as such.

The Setting

By June 1940, less than a year after the start of the World War 2, the German Army had overrun France, Poland, Holland, Belgium, Denmark and Norway. The beaten British Army had withdrawn from Dunkirk without its heavy weapons and equipment. Britain now stood alone against a German dominated Europe, with only 25 miles of the English Channel separating it from the victorious German armies.

In Britain defences were hastily erected. On 14th May 1940 the Local Defence Volunteers were formed. It was made up of men too old, or too infirm to join the regular army. The LDV later became known as the Home Guard after Churchill used the phrase in his famous " we shall fight them on the beaches" radio broadcast on 4 June 1940.

Hitler expected Britain to surrender, but because that didn't happen, on 16 July 1940, Hitler issued his Fuhrer Directive No 16 for the Conduct of the War. Its key sentence read,

"As England, in spite of the hopelessness of her military position, has so far shown herself unwilling to come to any compromise, I have therefore decided to begin to prepare for and, if necessary, carry out an invasion of England."

The operation was codenamed Seelowe (Sealion).

Operation Sealion

The German Army wanted to land on a 200 mile wide front stretching from Lyme Regis in the west to Ramsgate in the east, however the German Navy was constantly worried about the threat from the Royal Navy insisted on a narrower landing. A compromise was arrived at where the landings would be from Brighton in the west to Folkestone in the east. The first wave of about 60,000 men was to secure the beaches while the second wave comprised of the tank divisions that were to break out of the beachheads and capture the secondary objectives. The landings were to be assisted by airborne troops landing on the Downs above Brighton and north-west of Folkestone to help with the capture of crossings over the Royal Military Canal.

With the failure of the German Air Force to defeat the Royal Air Force the German High Command became increasingly nervous about the chances of a successful invasion. Initially it was intended to invade in August but on 3 September the High Command postponed Sealion to the 21st and then the 27th, which would be the last time that year the tides would be suitable.

On 15th September the German Air Force launched a major attack to destroy the RAF and to signal the start of the invasion. The Germans lost twice as many planes as the RAF. This signalled the end for Sealion. Hitler had it postponed indefinitely, while his attention was drawn towards the Soviet Union.

A Twist of Fate

However, in **1940 – England Invaded**, the German Air Force decisively win the Battle of Britain, destroying much of the RAF and winning control of the skies. On the 27 September 1940 the German Army hits the beaches and despite strong opposition from the remnants of Britain's beleaguered Army and the Home Guard the beachhead is soon won and the Germans swiftly round up the remains of the British Army with their second wave pushing inland swiftly in a repeat of their earlier Blitzkreig's in Europe.
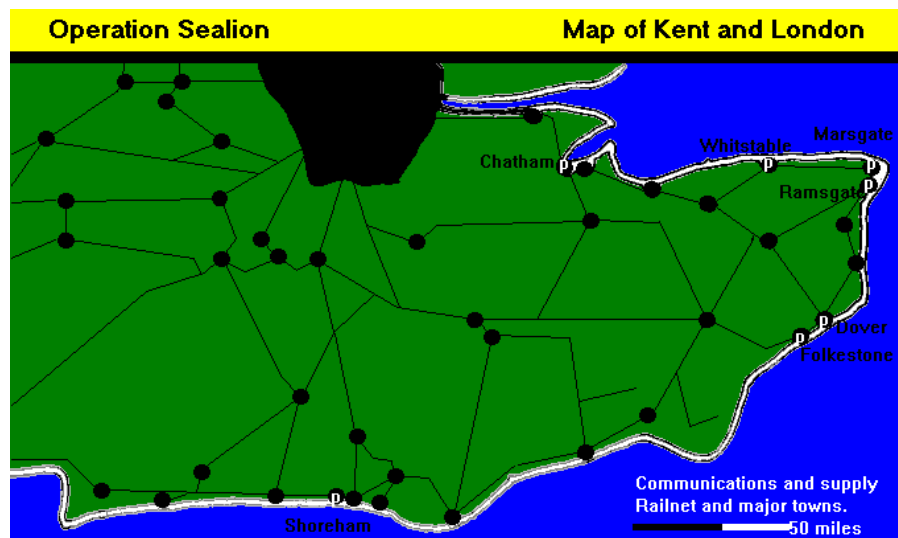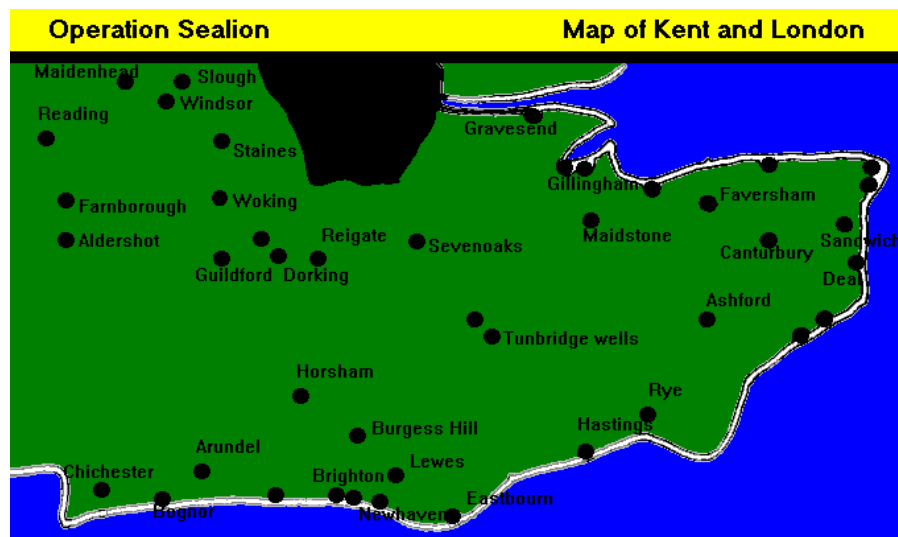
Characters

The characters in **1940 – England Invaded** are ordinary individuals – shopkeepers, farmers, publicans and postmistresses. They are the backbone of the communities they live in. However, they are not the young fit men that go to make up the armed forces or they would already have joined up and would now be in German POW camps. They are either too old or too young for active service or they are women or they have disabilities that mean they had to stay in their homes and jobs when the war started and continued to carry on despite the war.

However, when the Home Guard was formed, many of these men joined up and received at least some training before the Germans arrived. They still do their jobs and live their family lives by day, often under very close scrutiny by the German occupiers, but at night time they go out on missions to disrupt the German war machine by striking at military bases, destroying communication lines, attacking vehicle columns and destroying rail, road and bridge links to the north.

Your characters live in constant fear of discovery – not only for themselves but for their families at home. But, it is for their families and families of free thinking people everywhere that the characters become heroes by night to do whatever they can to slow and upset Hitler's plans.

Creating a character

Where are you from?

First of all, agree with the other players (or ask the GM) where the game is based. It is recommended that it is a small village or town maybe just inland from the coast, where there is likely to be a range of possible professions but where it is also not likely to be a major centre of German activity. The idea is that there will probably be a small German contingent in town, perhaps with a half-track, machine – gun and little else. They are not really expecting trouble here.

Job

This is what your character does in the daytime. It is a normal job. Examples are Vicar, Barman, Bank Manager, Farmer, Gamekeeper, Nurse, Vet, Barmaid, Policeman, Solicitor, Butcher and so on.

Description

Think about you character and what she looks like, what her attitude is, her age and distinguishing marks and so on. Remember, you are likely to be older than the normal characters you play in a role-playing game.

Family

Are you married, single, a widow? Do you have any children, grandchildren? What about close friends? Write a few important ones down. They will be used by the GM, to create situations and adventures that will actually have some meaning for your character.

Other notes

Anything else you have not mentioned about your character – is he passionate about anything or anyone – is he religious, does he own anything of note, did he fight in the Great War? Think about these things to round out your character.
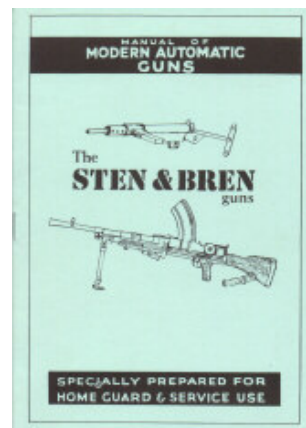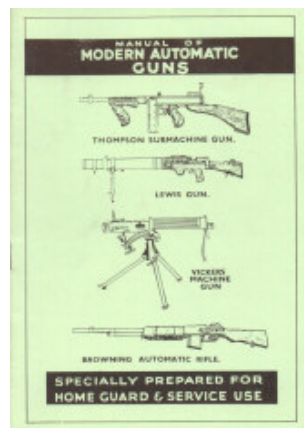
Attributes

Characters are defined by the following three attributes. The average person has 10 in each. You can take 40 points and spread them around where you like, with a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 14.

Physical

This is a measure of the character's strength, fitness, athleticism, endurance and speed. It reflects a characters inherent physical conditioning and so is used as a basis for any skills that involve doing anything physical from combat to climbing over walls and running from pursuers.

Coordination

This is a measure of the character's steadiness of hand and dexterity. It reflects a characters inherent deftness and so is used as a basis for any skills that involve fine manipulation, such as setting tripwires, driving a jeep, bomb disposal, safecracking and many handicrafts.

Mental

This is a measure of the character's intellect, awareness, knowledge and will. It reflects a character's inherent reasoning ability and is used as a basis for skills that require memory and recall such as local area knowledge, aircraft recognition, languages and so on.

Social

This is a measure of the character's social position, interactive ability, general appeal and charisma. It reflects a character's inherent personality and is used as a basis for skills that require skilful negotiation such as persuasion, bribery, seduction and public speaking.

Skills

You have 30 points to buy skills for your character. For the first point, you buy the skill at the level indicated by the attribute that governs the use of the skill. For each point spent thereafter, you get a further point in that skill. For example, a character with a 10 in Mental gets Awareness of 10 for the first point spent. If the player uses another skill point, his character then has an Awareness of 11. You can choose a maximum of 10 skills.

Any skills you do not select are either unavailable to the character, or the character can do the skill, but at chance equal to half the attribute (round down). Skills that are available to everyman are noted with an 'E'.

Awareness (Mental - E)

The skill of the character to notice things and to recognise the implication of what they have noticed and put it into perspective in the situation they are in.

Aircraft Recognition (Mental)

The ability to tell the nationality, type, features and weaponry of bombers, fighter planes and so on.

Climbing (Physical - E)

The skill of getting over vertical obstacles.

Driving (Coordination)

Choose vehicle type – wheeled or tracked. This is the skill of driving it in difficult conditions

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Rifles (Coordination)

Shooting at targets with military bolt-action rifles and non-military hunting rifles. Covers the use of shotguns too.

Pistols (Coordination)

The use of handguns – revolvers and automatics as well as sub-machine guns.

Military Vehicle Recognition (Mental)

The ability to tell the nationality, type, features and weaponry of a tanks, armoured cars and so on.

Hand-to-hand combat (Physical - E)

Fighting in close quarters, with fists, knives, improvised weapons and so on.

Information Gathering (Mental or Social - E)

The ability to find stuff out by either going out and talking to lots of people, listening to gossip and so on, or by looking at troop movements, getting snippets of information here and there and putting it all together. This skill is used when you don't want or need to role-play through all of the conversations and so on – to speed the game up. The player can choose his style of Information Gathering and therefore decide whether it is based on Mental or Social.

Persuasion (Social - E)

The skill of the character to talk another person into doing something he or she wasn't originally planning to do.

Local Area Knowledge (Mental - E)

One of the few advantages characters have is they know the area better than the invaders. They know the roads, the tracks, the hiding places and so on.

Specialist Weapons (Coordination)

The skill to use machine guns, anti tank guns, flamethrowers and so on.

Mechanics (Mental)

Being able to repair machinery – car and tank engines and so on.

Medicine (Mental)

The knowledge of and treatment of diseases and injuries.

Engineering (Mental)

The knowledge of civil and military engineering. Ability to design and direct construction (and destruction) of buildings, bridges, dams and fortifications.

Stealth (Physical - E)

The ability to move unnoticed and use terrain features and shadow to full advantage.

Pick Pockets (Coordination)

The ability to remove items from another persons clothing or body – watches, identity cards, passes, money and so on.

Forgery (Mental)

The skill of making and spotting fake papers and money.

Handicrafts (Coordination)

Choose something that is your profession or your hobby – it could be carpentry, blacksmithing, jewellry making, costume-making (useful for making or altering German uniforms!) or any other craft that you might want to flesh out your character.

These are just examples of the skills available in the game. If you think of any to round out your character, just check with the GM and spend the points.
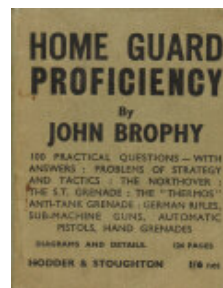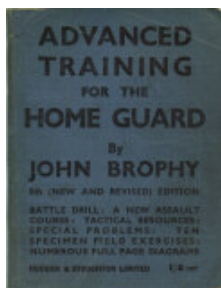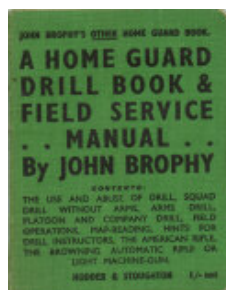
Hero Points

Sometimes even ordinary people are capable of extraordinary feats when they dig deep and their friends or their own lives are on the line. Hero points represent this ability. Each character starts with one Hero Point. It can be used at any time by the player, to make a success out of a failed roll or to reduce a wound received by one level to a lesser result or for any other equivalent purpose that the player thinks up and the GM allows.

Using Skills

When you want your character to do something for which he has a skill, roll a dice to see if he succeeds. The dice used in this game is a d20.

If you roll equal to your skill level you did very well at whatever you were trying to do. If you roll under your skill level you did it adequately. If you roll over your skill level you fail. A 1 always succeeds and a 20 always fails.

Modifiers

Sometimes the GM will decide that what your character is doing is quite easy or particularly difficult. If this is the case he might decide that there is a modifier to your chance of success – this is represented by a bonus or penalty to your skill level.

Task Difficulty	Modifier
Easy	+1
Moderate	0
Hard	-1
Very Hard	-2
Formidable	-3

Combat

Combat uses 5-second combat rounds. In this time a character can do one of the following actions: -

1) **Use aimed fire once** – uses one round of ammo, takes a full round.
2) **Rapid Fire twice** – uses one ammo per shot, -1 modifier 'to hit' target.
3) Rapid fire once and move – uses one ammo, -1 mod to hit, but able to move after or before firing.
4) **Burst fire** – (if weapon capable of burst fire – e.g. sub machine gun) takes the full round, fire 5 times at up to 5 targets at –2 to hit each.
5) **Opportunity Fire** – hold fire until a target presents itself.
6) **Melee** - attack and block/dodge once in a round. Blocking is at half the characters normal hand-to-hand chance.
7) **Charge into Melee** – attack at end of move.

The weapons

Weapon	Jam	Ammo	Typ	RANGE Sht	Med	Lng	WOUND Stun	Light	Heavy	Incap.	Kill
Revolver	19	6	s/r	25	50	100	1-7	8-14	15-18	19	20
Automatic	18	8	s/r	25	45	90	1-7	8-14	15-18	19	20
Smg	17	32	r/b	25	45	90	1-7	8-13	14-17	18-19	20
Rifle	19	10	s/r	75	150	300	1-6	7-11	12-16	17-18	19-20
Mg	20	30	r/b	100	300	500	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-18	19-20
Shotgun	19	2	s/r	20	40	60	1-5	6-11	12-16	17-19	20
Fist	-	-	-	-	-	-	1-14	15-17	18-19	20-21	22+
Knife	-	-	-	-	-	-	1-9	10-15	16-17	18-19	20
Cudgel	-	-	-	-	-	-	1-11	12-16	17-18	19-20	21+

What it means

Jam - this the chance the weapon will jam, when rolling your dice to hit in combat.
Ammo – how many round the weapon will fire before you need to reload
Type – whether the gun can fire single shot, rapid shot or burst fire
Range – in yards Short, Medium and Long. Modifiers are Moderate (-1), Hard (-2) and Very Hard (-3) respectively (see task modifiers table).
Wound – if you hit your target, you roll a further d20. This determines the level of wound done to the target.

**Stun** – Immediately fall prone. Can do nothing further for the rest of the round.
Light – As stun, only –2 on all skills used until recovered. A second light wound becomes a Heavy.
Heavy – as light plus all skills reduced to half (round down). Second wound (Light or Heavy) becomes incapacitated.
Inapacitated – make a roll against your Physical attribute. Failure means your character passes out. Otherwise he can take one action then pass out or lie there doing nothing but just about being conscious.

The Home Guard
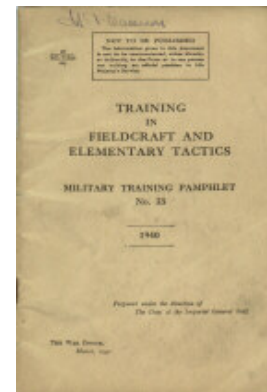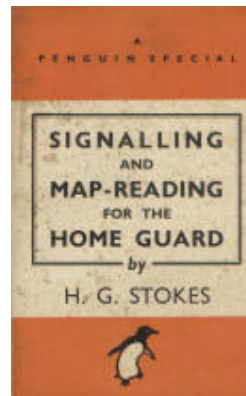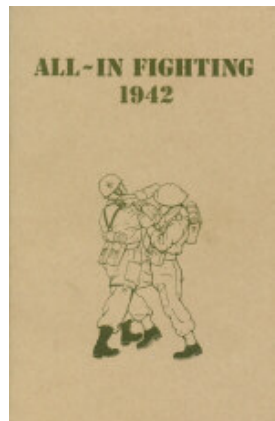
The Home Guard made its own fully functional weapons from pieces of scrap and litter. For example, Molotov cocktail anti-tank grenades were made from used beer and mineral water bottles and old pieces of cast iron drainpipes became 13-inch mortars!

Uniforms were also limited and all volunteers had to begin with were a simple forage cap and 'HG' stamped armband. This deficiency in arms didn't last for too long. Thanks to the United States, old World War One rifles and revolvers/ammunition were provided for use by the Home Guard. Proper uniforms eventually became widely available too. However, characters would be arrested by the Germans and placed in their POW camps if they were to wear them now that England has been invaded so best to hide them well away, for fear of house-to-house searches.
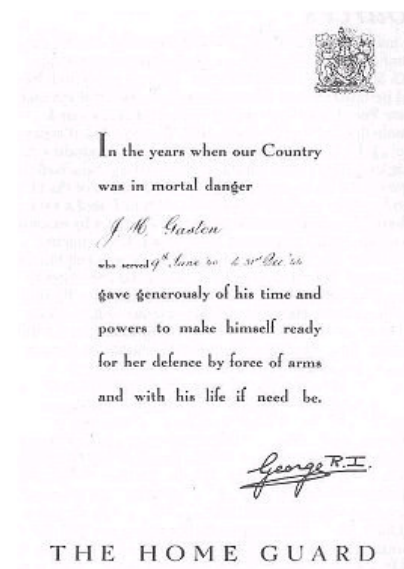
1940 - England Invaded

Character Sheet

Character Name	Job

Family & Friends	Description

Description	Other notes

Attributes

Physical ☐

Coordination ☐

Mental ☐

Social ☐

Skills

_____ ☐

_____ ☐

_____ ☐

_____ ☐

_____ ☐

_____ ☐

_____ ☐

_____ ☐

Wound Status